

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 14-19, and 21-24 are all the claims pending in the Application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 16, 17, and 21 to further clarify the invention and claim 14 for conformity therewith. In addition, Applicant cancels claims 13 and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Entry and consideration of this Amendment are respectfully requested.

I. Summary of the Office Action

By way of an overview, the Examiner maintained the rejections *i.e.*, claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,767,601 to Uchiyama (hereinafter “Uchiyama”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,196,304 to Koehly et al. (hereinafter “Koehly”) and U.S. Patent No. 5,304,885 to Wong et al. (hereinafter “Wong”). In addition, the Examiner rejected previously added claims 20-24 under the same grounds *i.e.*, as being obvious over Uchiyama, Koehly, and Wong. In addition, claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claim 20 has been cancelled, rendering this rejection moot.

III. Prior Art Rejections and Statement of Substance of Interview

Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Uchiyama, Koehly in view of Wong. Applicant respectfully traverses these grounds of rejection in view of the following comments.

Applicant thanks the Examiner Comas and the Supervisory Examiner Karl for the courteous in person interviews on January 3, 2007. An Examiner's Interview Summary Record (PTO-413) was given to Applicant's Representative after the interview. The PTO-413 requires the Applicant to file a Statement of Substance of the Interview. The Statement of Substance of the Interview is as follows.

During the interview independent claim 1 and dependent claim 13 were discussed. With respect to the dependent claim 13, the Examiners maintained that the outward extension/projection 39 of Koehly (Fig. 9) discloses the projection portion. The Examiners further maintained that the projection 39 of Koehly appear to overlap with a second portion extending in the circumferential direction and as such extends from the second portion. The Examiners did agree that amending claim 13 to recite that "the projection portion projects only from the second portion of a respective tooth" appears to overcome the rejection of record subject to further search and consideration.

In view of the foregoing, independent claims 1, 16, 17, and 21 are amended to recite, in some variation, that the second portion has a projection that projects only from the second portion of a respective tooth. At best, the projection 39 of Koehly projects over a portion of the first portion and over a portion of the second portion. In short, as acknowledged by the Examiner, the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the unique features of claims 1, 16, 17, and 21. Accordingly, claims 1, 16, 17, and 21 are patentable over the prior art of record. Claims 2-12, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 23 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1, 16, 17, or 21.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
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In addition, claim 11 recites having each end plate is made up of different material. The Examiner has not addressed this feature and it is not an obvious design choice as explained in ¶¶ 43 and 44 of the specification. For at least these additional reasons, claim 11 is patentable over the prior art of record. The Examiner indicated that features of claim 11 require further consideration and search.

With respect to independent claim 22, the Examiner agreed that the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest “the circumferential width of each of the projection portions of each of the two end plates is larger than the circumferential width of each of the first portions of each of the teeth.” Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection and to allow claim 22 and its dependent claim 24.

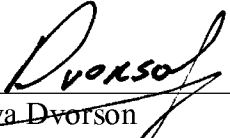
IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. **If any points remain in issue, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.**

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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